

REMARKS

In the pending Office Action, claim 4 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by USP Pub. No. 2002/0031885 to Takashima. However, Takashima does not constitute prior art to the instant application. More specifically, the effective filing date of Takashima for prior art purposes is September 10, 2001. However, the priority date of the instant application is November 30, 2000, based on the claim of priority to JP 2000-365276. A certified translation of priority document JP 2000-365276 is being filed concurrently herewith in order to perfect the Applicants' claim of priority. Thus, as the priority date of the instant application precedes the effective filing date of Takashima, Takashima does not constitute prior art to the instant application.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the pending rejection of claim 4 has been overcome.

It is noted that a Revocation of Attorney and Change of Address Request was previously filed in the above-identified application on May 27, 2003 (copy enclosed). However, it appears that these papers have not yet been entered into the records of the USPTO as the instant Office Action was mailed to the previous attorneys. It is respectfully requested that the records be updated such that all future correspondence is mailed to the proper attorney of record.

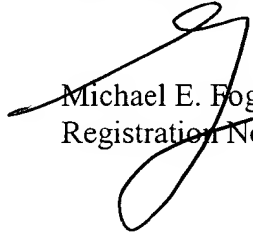
Having fully responded to all matters raised in the Office Action, Applicant submits that all claims are in condition for allowance, an indication for which is respectfully solicited.

If there are any outstanding issues that might be resolved by an interview or an Examiner's amendment, the Examiner is requested to call Applicants' attorney at the telephone number shown below.

Applicant believes that no extension of time is required. However, this conditional petition is being made to provide for the possibility that Applicant has inadvertently overlooked the need for a petition for extension of time. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees associated with this communication or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 50-0417.

Respectfully submitted,

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